

Sick Men of Europe

Mussolini's admiring gaze already turned towards the Third Reich; and soon the goose-step, called *Passo Romano*, would be seen in Rome—little dark Italians spiritedly kicking their legs into the air, like a flute playing Wagner. When Hitler did give the order for his troops to march into Austria, the other end of the Axis remained quiescent, rewarded by a telegram—'Mussolini, I shall never forget this.'

Through the jungle of international affairs, Mr. Eden continued to push his earnest, but somewhat indecisive, way. Since his advocacy of the abandonment of sanctions and acceptance of the policy of Non-Intervention in Spain, his popularity had declined; as Mr. Baldwin sagely remarked, it had been roses, roses all the way for him, but the brickbats had to come, as any old parliamentary hand well knew. Those who had looked to him to lead them to collective security, did not conceal their disappointment; still the wicked triumphed and the weak were downtrodden, as when Sir John Simon was Foreign Secretary, and, what was even more distressing, the danger of the strong having to choose between also being downtrodden and offering resistance, grew ever more imminent. That Abyssinia should have been abandoned, was disgraceful, but that England might be similarly threatened, appalling. Love of peace was, it seemed, like patriotism, not enough; and to implement it, rearmament had become necessary, and was actively, though not very effectually, undertaken.

When a law-abiding citizen, returning home with money in his pocket, meets with robbers, it is natural that he should try to

ingratiate himself with the least villainous looking
among them,
in the hope of thereby making resistance
unnecessary.¹ Mussolini

¹ An alternative tactic is to persuade himself that the
robbers have other
victims in view, and will never bother about him;
whistling the while to
keep up his spirits. This is Splendid Isolation, for long the
policy of Lord
Beaverbrook's organs, which persistently put forward the
view that Europe's
difficulties were no concern of the British Government's,
and that there
would be no war. Let everyone, they urged their readers,
quietly proceed
with his own affairs, and sleep quietly at nights, because
(often in capitals)